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Book review: H. Russell Bernard, ed., 1998. Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. pp. 816. ISBN (pb) 0 7619 9151 4. Price: \$89.95

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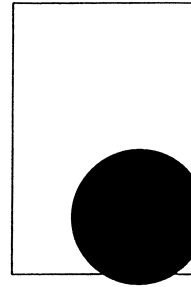
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Book reviews

H. Russell Bernard, ed., 1998. *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. pp. 816. ISBN (pb) 0 7619 9151 4. Price: \$89.95.

Almost 30 years after Naroll and Cohen edited *A Handbook of Method in Cultural Anthropology*, a comparable volume has been published. The new volume almost equals the former in size, but contains fewer chapters (19 instead of 49). Now, as then, almost all the authors are from North America, with this time only two (Thomas Schweizer and Ulf Hannerz) being European despite the editor having spent a sabbatical year in Germany preparing the book. Whereas the 1973 volume contained many reprints, the chapters of this handbook were written especially for the occasion. Another interesting difference is the plural of 'methods' in the title of the new handbook (the editor's introduction is subtitled 'On Method and Methods in Anthropology'). This not only reflects the increasing variety of available methods, but is also an indication of the methodological eclecticism Bernard advocates which avoids the well-known tendency to polarize along dichotomous, thematic and disciplinary lines. This eclecticism is argued theoretically, especially in the first part of the book. Quantitative and qualitative, scientific and humanist, positivist and interpretivist approaches are considered legitimate, both by themselves and in combination. Although the title refers to cultural anthropology as a discipline, the book was designed to be useful for scholars from other disciplines as well and therefore not only is participant observation not claimed as an anthropological trade mark but the quantitative leanings of the anthropological forebears are emphasized.

The order of the chapters has its predictable logic. After several theoretical chapters, a variety of techniques of data collection are discussed, followed by chapters on data analysis. The final chapters are dedicated to applied anthropology and to the presentation of research results to various audiences.

Part 1, 'Perspectives', occupying almost a third of the book, is probably the most interesting to the readers of this journal. The links between theory and the stance of methodological eclecticism is an interesting issue, just as is the question of the argument taken from theory for the choice of a particular design or method. The discussions on constructivism and postmodernism that have raged since the older handbook was published justify the inclusion of a long chapter on epistemology by Thomas Schweizer, whose argument underlines the conciliatory tone of the book. Similarly the chapter James Fernandez and Michael Herzfeld contributed, on meaningful methods to study meaning, carries the invitation to honour anthropology's double roots in science and

humanism. In his chapter on research designs, Jeffrey Johnson emphasizes the distinction between exploratory and explanatory studies, thereby pointing to the links between theory, analysis and research design. The other chapters in Part 1 of the book are dedicated to ethics, to feminist methods (understandably absent in the 1970 volume, and presented here with the conciliatory tone that characterizes the whole volume, rejecting the equation of masculine and quantitative, and recommending explicitness in pre-suppositions), and to transnational research – another newcomer.

The techniques discussed in Part 2 refer to observation, interviewing, questionnaire construction, discourse research, visual anthropology, and the study of archives. Usually the link between theoretical stance and the selection of a particular technique receives attention. Thus the humanist and scientific origins of participation and observation are elaborated and the connection between functionalism and participant observation drawn. In discussing the merits of observation, the emic/etic debate is addressed, and discourse study is explained with reference to the relationship between culture and language.

The value of such a once-in-three-decades book stems in part from its exceptionality as a huge project. Furthermore, though, it is a book to have on the shelf, next to the dictionaries, to consult whenever the need arises. Methodologists will find it extremely valuable and will go carefully through the chapters of his or her own speciality if not read the book from cover to cover. Those of us whose primary loyalty is with theoretical reflection in anthropology will as well discover much of value in this volume. Its eclectic perspective is a guarantee that any reader will find his or her interests addressed.

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Irene Bellier and Thomas Wilson, eds, 2000. *An Anthropology of the European Union: Building, Imagining and Experiencing the New Europe*. Oxford: Berg. pp. x + 205. ISBN (pb) 1 85973 329 8. Price: £14.99.

Anthropologists grappling with the European Union face multiple problems, the most serious among them being the emergent and highly reflexive nature of 'Europeanness' in cultural practice. If, broadly speaking, documenting and understanding a culture's habitus has been the traditional focus of anthropology, attempting this task for a contested entity under construction requires considerable retooling. And yet clearly anthropology has much to contribute to the understanding of the cultural processes entailed in Europeanization, which themselves pose a somewhat different ethnographic challenge than globalization. The latter has been acknowledged as a process occurring in tandem with the flow of people, goods and symbolic systems around the globe. Despite anthropology's past preference for privileging an image of hermetically sealed cultures, one has long come around to studying border crossings and contestations, and in the process has had to acknowledge the considerable antiquity of the tensions between the local and the global. By contrast, given the largely discursive existence of the EU, an anthropology of the EU requires several reflexive moves: what kind of